In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

INTRODUCTION

"Verily this Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward" (Sura Banī Isra'īl, No. 17, verse 9).

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims, (Sura Nahl, No. 16, verse 89).

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule of) Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful", (Sura An'ām, No. 6, verse 54).

In this century of research and scientific progression of the computer and endeavours for the conquest of space and finding new stars and galaxies, of even more than 50 million light years from us by modern instruments, and the efforts of astronomers and the faster means of communication have set in motion such rapid conveyances for men and material which were far beyond the imagination of the former generations of the human race and which causes a vital change and exchange of thoughts and religious ideology, the light of Islam is penetrating all curtains of every kind and is illuminating some individuals' hearts in nearly all parts of the world, inspite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital change and exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an. In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) has said about it: *"...When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it*

behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell. This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong)...", (Usul-i-Kāfī, vol. 2, p. 599.).

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic, at first, refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran, alone, and, probably there can be found some others, besides them, in libraries (and homes) throughout the world. This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to get the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of *Allah* are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, *'Tafsīr'*. Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal, here, with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three years, almost a pioneer service of its kind, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based especially upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars, with the consultation of some other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences, as our investigative sources on the path of producing this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by laymen. The style of writing, here, is a mixture of British-English and American-English undertandable for all the readers even for those acquainted with only one of them; but excuse us for using interchangable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; i.e.: **honour** and **honor.**

Not All English Versions of Qur'an Are Acceptable.

Some of the Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some of the producers of the literature on Islam in the English language are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in the Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have done the worst possible work which is for them to black-list the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful, subtle, mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts. The distortion and the misinterpretations are so strongly plastered with such attractive colors of the linguistic excellence and the delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their faith, get caught in the falsehood tempered with the eloquence and they swallow the **'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit'** and get themselves duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, of course, or even before the history, from when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have sucessfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also bound in our duty to *Allah*, His Final Word, the Holy Qur'an, the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best, at least, to present to every sincere seeker of it a selection of the proper translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an from among the best translations appropriate to the meaning of the original Arabic text, and the '***Tafsīr***', commentary, applied in this book.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of ' **Shi'a** ' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of *Allah*, revealed to the holy Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h.), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed. And it should be noted that, ***"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved." (85:21,22),*** whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were assorted and arranged at the command of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), himself. This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of *Allah*, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by *Allah*, Himself: ***"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)", (15:9).***

Furthermore, the English translations next to the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are elected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of **'References'**) which are from the best available

sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and, in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English, there has been some divine assistance bestowed (by *Allah*) through seeking help from the Messenger of Allah, the holy Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), who brought this message to light.

The translator of the current commentary, this writer, believes that the Word of *Allah*, the Holy Qur'an, which is one of the two weights 'ثقلين', is too magnificent for him to translate, because of the fear of *Allah*, and he needed a kind of permission from Him to change the original text from Arabic into another language: ***"Verily this is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds"*** , ***"In the perspicuous Arabic tongue", (26:192, 195).***

In a few instances this writer changed a word of those existing translations into a better one, with sufficient evidences, of course, and where a link or a conjuction was needed in the cases that the English translation of the first part of a verse was elected from one translator and the rest of the verse from another one to join them together, existing material was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but it is not sometimes enough for the readers of it to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings that it bears, and, it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity: ***"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you..." (73:20)***. This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us. But, it is not always possible to understand the Holy Book by itself, fully, as *Allah* says: ***"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable," "Which none shall touch but those who are purified" (56:77, 79).***

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary for the understanding of the text to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the phililogical changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today. Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and

especially the ambiguous / mutašābihāt / ; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the / rāsixūna fil 'ilm / ; those deeply established in knowledge, with even the names of the hinted custodians of the knowledge to remain concealed. They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), himself, the agency or the source authorized by *Allah* and the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) viz, ***Ahlul-Bait*** who were connected to the knowledge of *Allah*, (as He says: ***"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence" (18:65),***) knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations.

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations, or, in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions / aṣḥāb / and were afterward written down which are called ' ***Hadīth*** ' or 'traditions' . Of course, the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) had openly declared in Hadīth-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the ***Ahlul-Bait***, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, Ahlul-Bait's explanations and narrations, concerned with the matter, were added to them and, together with the effect of experts of religious scholars in the past and present, brought up ' ***Exegesis*** ' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science by itself and was called '***Tafsīr***' , commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) for a particular occasion which has also a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time, to enlighten the world, thoroughly. This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening the corners everywhere in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need '***Tafsīr***', (commentary).

Some of them, the Shi'a believers in particular, have been led to this Center; Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (a.s.) Library, which received many letters requesting a clear, concise English Tafsīr, 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So, the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujāhed Alhājj 'Allamah Saiyed Kamāl Faqhīh Īmānī, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies. Then, 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. and 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years of time for the translators to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an as a sample and after its publication and receiving the constructive comments of the readers and, then, with a better skillfulness in the writer or writers, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled **'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an'**, begin with Sura Insān, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Sura is about Man and his creation from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful. However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsīr is an attempt to analize and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an. Moreover, *Allah*, Himself, says: ***"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims", (Sura Nahl, No. 16, verse 89).***

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit, at least, about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / / to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book, (p. xxii).

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text, itself, which is usually perfectly perspicuous as it claims to be. With the help of *Allah*, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned clergymen, and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that *Allah* accepts it, but the nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes. For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like / **amrun bayn al amrayn** / in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because the concept is not found in English literature; or the meaning of some words like '**prostration**', in English, is rather different with what / **sajdah** / exactly means in Arabic. In such cases we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and, also, where they were not unanimous, we used the ideas of the new writers who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations when the senses adopted with the commentary sources

that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course, are always helpful, which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Sura under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea. The text of these verses and, also, the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul-Bait (p.b.u.th.) is printed in English in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will

Translator's Note:

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here, in this regard, are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any pecular distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial. ***"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance" (20:50)*** .

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of ***verses 11-16*** from ***Sura 'Abasa No. 80***, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to *Allah*. It is always true what the Qur'an says: ***"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise" (76:30)*** .

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, *Allah* willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by *Allah*. Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

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Editor's Note:

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of *Allah* have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of **' An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an '** has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named ***Zarnegar***, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages. Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years ago, now, that, in America, I became ***enlightened*** to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us, as children, that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools, on hand, to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called *Ayatollah Khomeini*, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland. ***"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,' and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous" (H.Q. 3:193).***

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Mohammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought *A. Yusef Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an*, basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and, then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary. Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor...(*H.Q. 3:42-45*).

And it went on: Practice charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found - no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible - nothing but ***pure*** scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear, to me, that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair. ***"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..." (H.Q. 24:31).***

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on *Allah*. ***"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.' " (H.Q. 17:24).***

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life. ***"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..." (H.Q. 2:256).***

The '***Big Sell***' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce. ***"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will " (H.Q. 2:212).***

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fullfil my desire. ***"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive...(H.Q. 4:95).***

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an. ***"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..." (H.Q. 65:2-3).***

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-comsuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquility cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that *Allah* does consider me worthy. ***"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light " (H.Q. 2:257).***

Wa Salam

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